

# SSGIC

## Strategic Planning Meeting

October 21, 2003

Central California Interagency Communications Center - Porterville, CA

### Participants

Name	Agency	Phone Number	Email Address
Shannon Alto	Tule River Tribe	559-784-0124	<a href="mailto:rezdv10@aol.com">rezdv10@aol.com</a>
Megan Bidart	CDF, Tulare	559-732-5954	<a href="mailto:megan.hall-bidart@fire.ca.gov">megan.hall-bidart@fire.ca.gov</a>
Chuck Dickson	Kern Co. Fire Dept.	661-391-7096	<a href="mailto:cdickson@co.kern.ca.us">cdickson@co.kern.ca.us</a>
Craig French	USFS, Sequoia	559-288-3558	<a href="mailto:cfrench01@fs.fed.us">cfrench01@fs.fed.us</a>
Karen Folger	NPS, SEKI	559-565-3795	<a href="mailto:kfolger@nps.gov">kfolger@nps.gov</a>
Aaron Gelobter	USFS, Sequoia NF	559-784-1500 x1163	<a href="mailto:agelobter@fs.fed.us">agelobter@fs.fed.us</a>
Heidi Hosler	USFS, Sequoia	559-784-1500 x1121	<a href="mailto:hhosler@fs.fed.us">hhosler@fs.fed.us</a>
Bill Kaage	NPS, SEKI	559-565-3160	<a href="mailto:bill_kaage@nps.gov">bill_kaage@nps.gov</a>
Pat Lineback	NPS, SEKI	559-565-3725	<a href="mailto:pat_lineback@nps.gov">pat_lineback@nps.gov</a>
Jeff Manley	NPS, NIFC	208-947-3778	<a href="mailto:jeff_manley@nps.gov">jeff_manley@nps.gov</a>
Ron Recker	BIA	916-978-6065	<a href="mailto:mail373002@pop.net">mail373002@pop.net</a>
Brain Rueger	Tule River Res.	559-781-4271	<a href="mailto:prueger@ocsnet.net">prueger@ocsnet.net</a>
Tony Sarzotti	BLM, Bakersfield	661 391-6096	<a href="mailto:asarzott@ca.blm.gov">asarzott@ca.blm.gov</a>
Diane Travis	USFS, Sequoia	559-784-1500 x1122	<a href="mailto:dhtravis@fs.fed.us">dhtravis@fs.fed.us</a>
Larry Vredenburg	BLM, Bakersfield	661-391-6153	<a href="mailto:lvredenb@ca.blm.gov">lvredenb@ca.blm.gov</a>
Anne Birkholz	SSGIC	559-565-3704	<a href="mailto:anne_birkholz@nps.gov">anne_birkholz@nps.gov</a>

### Overview

The Southern Sierra Geographic Information Cooperative (SSGIC) is an interagency cooperative with five primary stakeholder agencies, Bakersfield BLM, CDF-Tulare unit, Kern Co. Fire Dept., Sequoia National Forest, and Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks. The project's primary goal is to develop a landscape scale framework for interagency fire management planning. The three-year Joint Fire Sciences Program (JFSP) grant funding the SSGIC ended in December of 2002. The goal of this ½ day meeting was to evaluate and modify current direction to ensure it meets program needs. Existing agreements still in force under which SSGIC is operating were reviewed. *Action items are in italics.*

### Status Review

Pat Lineback reviewed the current status of SSGIC. The last JFSP deliverable, final documentation of the program, is currently being printed and will be available soon. The recommendations and conclusions in the document were reviewed. While some interim funding has been received to continue the program, long term funding and implementation strategies still need to be determined.

### Data Development Needs and Priorities

Funds made available to the SSGIC by the FPA system last fiscal year have been used to hire a GIS technician to assist in data development and analysis. Orlando Ruez will begin work on Oct. 27, 2003 and is funded for 34 weeks. His efforts will support both the SSGIC and FPA programs.

The following datasets were identified as priorities for developing or updating at the May 2, 2003 meeting:

- Fuels and fuel related data
- Vegetation data
- Land Status
- Enhanced Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
- Roads
- Special Management Zones
- Assets
- FPA Fire Planning Unit
- FPA Fire Management Units
- Fire Ignition data
- FPA Resource Locations
- Additional FPA needs both tabular and spatial

The development of several of these datasets will be complex and time consuming, requiring a team effort. Lead individuals were identified for the following datasets:

- *Karen Folger – Fuels and vegetation data*
- *Larry Vredenburg – Enhanced Wildland Urban Interface*
- *Heidi Hosler – Land Status*

*Team leads will begin to assemble teams, develop actions plans, and identify fiscal needs. They will report their progress at the Jan. 22, 2004 meeting. Orlando Ruez will be available to work with these teams.*

The goal of “second generation” interagency datasets will be to meet or exceed the quality of each agency’s source data in contrast to the “common denominator” approach used in the previous generation datasets. During the previous fire season the need for a “trails” dataset was identified and it will be added to the above list.

### **Recommendation to Update SSGIC Analyses**

The fire analyses now available on the SSGIC website were derived from 2001 data. Feedback from users has identified the need maintain the currency of these products on an annual basis. As updated source datasets are completed, these changes need to be incorporated into the analysis outputs. *SSGIC will update the following analyses in 2004, implementing the same protocols that were used in 2002:*

- *Risk – FOA (Fire Occurrence Areas)*
- *Hazard – Flammap*
- *Values (Ecological) – FRID (Fire Return Interval Departure)*

We will not reevaluate the entire analysis framework previously established by the SSGIC, but will consider any suggestions for new or additional analyses brought forward.

### **Web based opportunities**

A discussion was held on the effectiveness of the SSGIC website, opportunities available for expanded functionality, and how we should proceed with development of the website. The current

web server could handle significantly increased use and a number of options exist for expanding its functionality and available map services. The Fire Management Officer's (FMO) present indicated that their staffs were generally not using the website. Reasons cited included lack of knowledge that the site exists, insufficient training on using the site, poor data quality, and limited interactive capability. Efforts to address each of these issues were discussed during the meeting and decisions to make improvements in each area are noted elsewhere in these meeting notes.

A prototype Fire Use map service is available to show how current fire use information could be maintained on the web server. *Bill Kaage will see if there is interest in developing it at the next Southern Sierra Fire Management Officer meeting.* Network security policy's still prevent remote access to the server by each agency's identified ArcIMS manager, but SSGIC is pressing forward on establishing remote access.

### **Fire Severity Mapping**

Karen Folger presented the work she has been doing with an interagency team to develop processes for mapping fire severity in the southern Sierra Nevada. The team established field plots in several recently burned areas and collected fire severity data. These plots will be used to develop procedures to assign burn severity to satellite imagery showing change. The EROS data center will calculate the difference between pre and post fire Thematic Mapper satellite imagery to identify the changed areas. Burn severity data can be used to modify vegetation and fuels data to better reflect ground conditions after a fire, an important step towards improving the quality of fire analyses.

### **High Priority Fuels Treatment Areas**

SSGIC has purchased high resolution QuickBird satellite imagery for two of the five high priority fuels treatment areas identified by SSGIC fire staffs based on the SSGIC analysis. Areas included are Dillonwood (100 km<sup>2</sup>) and Wofford Heights (132 km<sup>2</sup>). This is black and white plus multispectral imagery. Resolution of the black and white data is 0.6 meters and that of the multispectral data is 2.6 meters. This could be used to assist in developing fuels projects in these areas. However, it is the local fire managers, not those present at this meeting, who make the decisions about where to implement fuels treatments and they need to be present to further discuss this.

### **SSGIC Sponsored Training**

Use of the SSGIC website by the local fire community is still limited by lack of knowledge of the site as well as skills in GIS and using a web based site. *To help fill this gap, the SSGIC will develop two training sessions. A one day session will focus on using the SSGIC website and its products. A two day course on GIS skills will focus on fire related issues and needs. These will be offered this winter to all agencies at the Bakersfield BLM field office training center. Agency FMO's will encourage participation.*

### **Review of Formal Agreements**

Pat Lineback reviewed the two formal documents that the SSGIC is currently operating under. The first is the Five Party Agreement that established the SSGIC. It expires July 18, 2006. The second is a Memorandum of Understanding between Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and the United States Geological Survey for the continuing support of the SSGIC web server. It expires August 8, 2004. It is not known what will happen to the web server if no continuing agreement is made with the USGS. It was decided that the first document is sufficient to meet SSGIC needs to exchange funds between agencies. No action was taken on web server support.

### **Distribution of Existing Funding**

SSGIC has received funding from the National Park Service to support the current program manager position and an unfilled fire ecologist position. It is not known if this is single year or multi-year funding. *Bill Kaage will find out in mid November if the fire ecologist funds are multi-year and appropriate uses.* If this funding is only available for a single year, it is probably not feasible to fill a short term position. In this case, we will see if we can use the funds to support SSGIC needs through a variety of avenues such as small contracts. Pat Lineback outlined some opportunities for the use of these funds as follows (dollar values approximate):

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|--|----------|
| • To USGS for server support following the expiration of the current MOU noted above               | \$10,000 |
| • To correct data anomalies in the DEM dataset   | \$ 5,000 |
| • Developmental server to provide a secure platform platform to develop map services               | \$ 5,000 |
| • Purchase additional QuickBird imagery of the remaining three high priority fuels treatment areas | \$ 9,000 |
| • Fuels classification of high priority fuels treatment areas based on QuickBird imagery           | \$ ???   |
| • Support for teams identified to develop fuels/veg, land status, and enhances WUI data            | \$ ???   |
| • Support for fire severity mapping/calibration  | \$ ???   |

Decisions on these items will be postponed until we better understand funding commitments and appropriate use of these funds.

The FPA system will provide additional funding (approx. \$60,000) to the southern Sierra prototype area for fiscal years 2003 and 2004. The 2003 funds have been used to hire Orlando Ruez. Distribution of the FPA 2004 funds will be determined by the Southern Sierra FPA core team.

### **New JFSP Grant Proposal**

The USGS is interested in taking the lead in writing a new JFSP grant proposal to expand web functionality. This would include much of the functionality requested by SSGIC users. Examples include:

- 1) The ability to add data by drawing polygons on map services via web browsers,
- 2) Using web based applications such as the Asset Analyzer,
- 3) The ability to download data for a project area defined on-the-fly by the user
- 4) The ability to document change and track accomplishments via web based analysis,
- 5) Imposing web based security on sensitive map services,
- 6) And developing map customization tools.

SSGIC would be a cooperator in the grant. Our participation would involve developing a needs assessment of the desired web functionalities and the use of our web server and user community to test applications and procedures developed by the USGS. SSGIC would cooperate on this grant proposal with the understanding that the impact to local agencies would be limited to providing input to the grant writing process in fiscal year 2004.

**Upcoming Meetings**

The next general meeting of the SSGIC is scheduled for January 22, 2004 in the conference room of the Central California Interagency Communications Center, Porterville, CA.